THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (c) Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) provides loan assistance to the State Electricity Boards/State Power Utilities/ State Power Departments for various schemes including procurement and installation of meters. REC sanctioned loan assistance of Rs. 5.16 crore to the Government of Manipur, for procurement and installation of 73000 energy meters. Financial Assistance of Rs. 4.4 crore was released by REC upto 31.3.2001 on the basis of meters procured by the Government of Manipur. REC does not procure meters or any other equipment and, therefore, the release of funds to the suppliers by REC does not arise. The State Electricity Board/State Power Department who procure materials make payments to the suppliers as per terms of their contract.

Plan for Development of Roads in North Eastern Region

4. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) the details of action taken by Government to develop the Roads in the North-Eastern Region in connection with comprehensive economic development;

(b) whether the Dhodar Ali, a 17th century road, connects many towns of Assam as well as connects Chansglang and Triap Districts of Arunachal Pradesh and Mon and Mokakchung Districts of Nagaland through link roads; and

(c) whether Government would consider to propose to convert it into a National Highway as an infrastructure for development of vast areas of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Development of State roads is undertaken by the State governments. Where specifically requested or authorised by a State, central agencies like Border Roads Organisation take up development of state roads as well. Union Government supplements the efforts of State Governments. The Department of Road Transport and Highways, Government of India has prepared an Action Plan for development of 12 new National Highways and extension of existing National Highways covering a length of 1962 kilometers at an estimated cost of Rs. 1208.5 crores. Additionally 10 roads covering a total length of 662 kilometers have also been undertaken by North Eastern Council under the 9th Plan.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) There is no proposal under consideration at present to convert this road into National Highway.

Decision to Speed-up Disinvestment of PSUs

5. SHRI C.M. IBRAHIM: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether, as indicated at the meeting of the Council on Trade and Industry held in New Delhi on September 7, 2001, Government have decided to hasten privatisation of specified PSU;

(b) if so, the details of these PSUs; and

(c) the steps since taken for privatisation thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DISINVESTMENT (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (c) In the meeting of the PM's Council of Trade and Industry held on 7th September, 2001, some members stressed the need for faster implementation of disinvestment in Public Sector Undertakings.

Government has identified 13 public sector enterprises, with tight time frame, to be disinvested this year. These are: Bharat Heavy Plates & Vessels Ltd. (BHPV), CMC Ltd., IBP Co. Ltd., Indian Petrochemicals Corporation Ltd. (IPCL), India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC), Instrumentation Control Valves Ltd. (ICVL), Jessop & Co. Ltd., Maruti Udyog Ltd., NEPA Ltd., HTL Ltd., Hindustan Zinc Ltd., Hotel Corporation of India Ltd. and Videsh Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (VSNL). Out of them, disinvestment transaction has already been completed in respect of HTL Limited and CMC Limited. Action has also been finalised in respect of certain hotels under ITDC & Hotel Corporation of India.

News-item "Separate law for disinvestment"

6. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of DISINVESTMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Separate Law" for disinvestment needed: expert, which appeared in the Hindustan Times, dated 10th September 2001;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto and whether Government share the perception of the experts with regard to the lackadaisical approach of Government to disinvestment process so far; and